

WASHINGTON, D. C. SUNDAY, JANUARY 30, 1916. \*\*\*

# Old, old problem of sex furnishes theme for New Drama by Feminine Playwrights

By JULIA CHANDLER.

Umph-humph, another premiere!

The one hundred and fifth dramatic production made upon the American stage since the 21st of last June when the Ziegfeld Follies opened early the new dramatic year that has proven the most active and prosperous in the history of our theater.

And the end is not yet.

Between now and June many new offerings are planned, with Washington scheduled as the seat of judgment for many of them. And the plans are prophetic of a new era in stage history, which would seem to go around in a circle.

Since the immense vogue for costume plays some twenty years ago we have had about everything under the sun dished up to us on the dramatic salver. The sex play with the eternal triangle was revived; the demi-monde had its salacious fling; detective thrillers stirred the public pulse; social problems (such as the white slave evil) were nauseously exploited; medical discussions were dragged in, until, for a time, it seemed to theater-goers that the producers had lifted the lid of Pandora's box and let all the evils of the world out upon the stage.

But now we seem to be coming—in circular fashion—to the place from which we started, the pendulum of the drama swinging back to the costume play that held for us the delightful glamour of romance in the yesterday.

In support of this belief David Belasco announces that the new play which he is soon to produce as a starring vehicle for Frances Starr is a romantic costume comedy of the period of 1820, while he is also preparing for presentation another romantic piece—"The Florentines," written by Maurice Samuels—and already has he given us this season a beautifully symbolic costume romance in "Van der Decken," the vehicle he constructed on the framework of the legend of the "Flying Dutchman" for the use of David Warfield.

Nor is the Belasco faith in the present as an auspicious time for a return to the romantic and costume drama the only indication that such plays will shortly dominate the boards. The success of "Treasure Island" in New York has been great. Lou Tellegen is now considering a costume play for early production. Last week we had a beautiful example of romantic drama in the idealistic story of the pacifist play, "The Greatest Nation," which was so splendidly acted and so artistically staged at the Belasco Theater, and there are still other plans, as yet but dimly outlined, which promise well for less of the seamy side and more of the romance of life upon the stage in the near future.

The new play which is to have its initial performance at the Belasco Theater tomorrow evening (after a dress rehearsal in Stamford, Conn., last evening) is not, however, a costume play. It is of America and the present period, written by Alice Leal Pollock and Rita Weiman, who have entitled it "The Co-respondent."

The theme suggests the old, old sex problem based on the position of the other woman in the life of the man whose affections cannot be bound by marriage vows.

"The Co-respondent" is under the direction of Edward Elmer, and the cast announced for its presentation contains a roster of names—headed by Emily Ann Wellman in the title role—that promise well for its success.

And, by the way, our one-time Poli Stock leading man, Rockliffe Fellowes, is numbered among the players. Mr. Fellowes was to have supported Mrs. Fiske in "Erstwhile Susan," but a cog slipped somewhere and Edward Robins played the hero part instead.

In lighter vein comes Julian Eltinge to the New National this week in his latest concoction of feminine impersonation; sartorial delight, with musical interpolation, entitled "Cousin Lucy," in which the popular star appears, as usual, in female incognito.

The art of Julian Eltinge is no new thing although he is its sole entirely successful exponent in this country. Men impersonating women is as old as the theater itself. In Shakespeare's time all feminine roles were played by men—it being considered a disgrace for a woman to follow the stage as a profession—the only difference being that Hart and his contemporaries each received about three pounds (\$15) weekly, whereas Julian Eltinge rakes into his coffers (by way of salary and percentage) anywhere between \$3,000 and \$5,000.

But, believe me, he earns it. Several years ago Mr. Eltinge described to me the personal sacrifices that charming smile which flashes throughout the time he trips the boards in feminine attire, the comedian's comments having suggested to my mind that it was more likely a grim grin of endurance than any expression of comfort and happiness.

To prevent too much avoirdupois Mr. Eltinge follows the most rigid rules in his daily life. He must not get fat. He must lose none of the velvety softness of his skin. He must gain no masculine muscle, which means total abstinence from the sports he adores. He must annex no wrinkles if he intends to keep up the splendid illusions he now creates in his impersonations, so he must not worry, and this means that he dare not take the chance of matrimony.

The present day offers a horde of Eltinge imitators who burlesque feminine charms, but there is only one Julian, and you may well believe that he maintains the incomparable Eltinge standard through a system of self-denial and fidelity to his art that is nothing short of martyrdom.

In the dainty person of Elsie Janies there comes to Keith's this week the most gifted mimetic artiste of the present time. Since that lucky day when, as a child, she so delighted the late President McKinley with her delightful imitations as to bring from him the comment that started her up her ladder of fame, Miss Janies has known a steady gain in popularity from year to year until today finds her securely ensconced in the heart of both the British and American public. For, in the midst of her rapid American successes in "The Vanderbilt Cup" (which began her stellar career in 1906), "The Hoyden," "The Fair Co-ed," and "The Slim Princess," mother Janies (who has given her life to promoting the girl's stage success), somehow managed a London engagement for Elsie which meant a tremendous hit for the young American artiste abroad.

We owe our present good luck of having her mimetic studies in vaudeville to the failure of her this season's musical comedy vehicle, "Miss Information," in which she appeared under the direction of C. B. Dillingham, who recently transferred his claims upon the time and talent of his star to E. F. Albee.

At the close of her fifteen weeks in vaudeville Miss Janies will be starred in a new piece, called "Betty," under the management of Oliver Morosco.

The premiere will be given in Los Angeles.

According to his contract with the Poli management when he returned to Washington A. H. Van Buren will take his customary twelfth-week vacation from his arduous duties as head of the Poli Players this week.

And, you can just take it from him, it isn't going to be the same sort of vacation he had last time. Not that it was anybody's fault but his own, for you see, the Poli company was preparing for the production of Julius Caesar, which so stirred Mr. Van Buren's interest and ambition that he spent his entire week's vacation designing the scenery, and working to make the production the most artistic ever given by a stock organization.

He succeeded so well that he declared that he was quite compensated



MARIE CHAMBERS & EMILY ANN WELLMAN  
—BELASCO—

## Dramatic Calendar of the Week

**Belasco**—"The Co-Respondent." A new sex play, revealing the possibilities of circumstantial evidence in effecting a woman's humiliation. Premiere here tomorrow night.

**National**—Julian Eltinge in "Cousin Lucy." The usual Eltinge melange of female impersonations; song interpolations and elaborate sartorial effects.

**Poli's**—"The Dummy." The clever detective comedy by Harvey J. O'Higgins and Harriet Ford.

**Keith's**—Elsie Janies, the famous mimetic star, surrounded by an attractive vaudeville bill.

**Gaiety**—Burlesque.

**Casino**—Hall Stock Company, in "The Christian."

**Cosmos**—Vaudeville.

**Locw's Columbia**—Paramount Pictures.

**Garden**—Feature Films.

**Strand**—Feature Films.

### Belasco—"The Co-Respondent."

Announcement is made of the premiere at the Belasco Theater tomorrow evening of the new play entitled "The Co-Respondent."

The "Co-respondent" is in four acts and has been written by Alice Leal Pollock and Rita Weiman. The action of the story begins in a suite of a small Western hotel, whence a young girl has journeyed from her rural home to meet clandestinely, and marry an attractive young New York man. The youthful couple, who are innocently placed in the most humiliating position which a woman is called upon to face—a co-respondent. The ingenious manner in which she fights against these odds comprises the theme of the play.

Emily Ann Wellman, who was last seen here with Louis Mann will play the title role and Rockliffe Fellowes will interpret the part of the worldly New Yorker. The other members of the company include Ramsey Wallace, who has just returned to the United States from the London production of "Klick in," Morgan Coman, who was last seen in the Belasco production of "Marie Odille," Joseph Gilroy, Hallett Thompson, Marie Chambers, Susanne Willis, and Elmer Redmond.

### National—Julian Eltinge in "Cousin Lucy."

Julian Eltinge, the dual-role star who begins a week's visit at the National tomorrow evening, promises to please his admirers with an opening-night wardrobe of unusual beauty. Eltinge has always been famous for his frocks, but the present collection, to be shown for the first time in this country Monday, is said to transcend anything he has heretofore exhibited while impersonating handsome women.

While dress plays an important and necessary part with "Cousin Lucy," the musical comedy in which Eltinge will be seen, it by no means is the chief ingredient. Musical numbers are freely interpolated under the titles of "Those Come Hither Eyes," "Call On Me," "Two Heads Are Better Than One," "At Your Service Girls," "Summertime," and "Sometime the Dream Comes True." Furthermore, "Cousin Lucy" has a plot, with just enough elasticity to permit Eltinge to appear as a stunning young woman, or to rip off his wig and play the manly man as he is in propria persona. In brief, Julian Eltinge, in the play, is Jerry Jackson masquerading as his sister Lucy, who is a victim of the latest escapade, before his pseudo-death. Jerry has become entangled with one Queenie Belmont, who, on the announcement of his death in the West, comes to claim his estate as his wife, which is a complication about life insurance which drives Jerry to the necessity of acting as a model in a dressmaking shop, and there is a love theme to add to his distress.

In his supporting company will be seen Dallas Walcott, Max Stumpe, Robson, Harriet Ford, Mabel Acker, Ruth Garl, and Austin Webb and Mark Smith.

### Poli's—"The Dummy."

A treat is in store for the patrons of Poli's this week, where Harvey J. O'Higgins and Harriet Ford's detective comedy, "The Dummy," will be presented. This entertainment had its first performance on any stage in Washington, two years ago, and following its success here was taken to New York City, where it scored a hit at the Hudson Theater, and remained there all spring and through the summer.

The hero of "The Dummy" is a young street urchin who, after having read numerous detective yarns, decides that he wants to be a sleuth of the law himself. He calls upon the chief of a detective bureau in New York, and applies for a job. The boy's cleverness and resourcefulness impress Babbling, the detective chief, so favorably that he gives him a chance. It so happens that Babbling is at this moment engaged in trying to trace the movements of a notorious

gang of kidnapers which has made off with the daughter of a wealthy couple. Babbling conceives the idea of having the boy kidnapped by the same gang. The boy poses as a deaf mute, and when he is captured, is placed in the same room with the child who is being sought. How "the dummy," as he is called by the kidnapers, succeeds in frustrating the plans of the criminals, who are intent upon taking the kidnapped child out of the country, and how he brings two of the members of the gang within the grasp of the long arm of the law, constitute the gist of the plot.

The authors have told their story in engaging fashion, and thrilling scenes alternate with amusing comedy situations.

### Keith's—Elsie Janies.

Elsie Janies, in Keith vaudeville for fifteen weeks, will this week stop over in Washington, where she has not been seen in vaudeville since the early days of "Little Elsie." Miss Janies is offering her own whimsical arrangement, "Impressions of My Favorite Stars," the oddity of it is that each of her celebrated subjects is presented in just the reverse of what they ordinarily do, thus revealing a surprising, novel, and humorous series of mimetic studies.

In the offering is Miss Janies' famous "Joyous Dance." She sings "Hello, Frisco" by special arrangement with Florenz Ziegfeld.

In the supporting bill is a new musical feature, "Ralph Dunbar's Maryland Singers," six girls in the crinolines of the South in the '80s, and a banjoist giving the melodies of Dixie before the war.

Will Moritz and Dollie Hackett will add their Broadway ditties and dances; Claude and Fannie Usher will play "Fanny's Decision"; Raymond and Caverly will present new patter and chatter; Corcoran and Dingle will give "A Vaudeville Splash"; Ralph Lohse and Nana Sterling will combine beauty and skill.

Herbert's loop the loop and leaping dogs are included and the organ recitals and Pathe pictorial will be other additions. At Keith's today the bill will offer "The Foxes Fire," James and Bonnie Thornton, Frederick V. Bowers and company, Ruth Royce, Savoy and Brennan, Joseph Bernard and company, Calais brothers, Bradley and Norris and other regular and added offerings.

### Gaiety—Burlesque.

What mere man may expect when suffragists shall have won their fight for equal franchise is presented in a satire, "Suffragette's Convention," by "The Smiling Beauties Company" at the Gaiety this week. Zella Russell plays the role of the candidate for mayor, while the political boss is played by Joseph Emerson and the leading male roles. Another feature of the performance is "High Life in Jail," a burlesque on life in prison since the Prison Welfare has come into being. Of course no burlesque company would be complete without a comely chorus, and that "The Smiling Beauties Company" is possessed of such a valuable adjunct is announced by the management of the Gaiety.

At the Gaiety today the company of the Big Burlesque Carnival, headed by "Sliding" Billy Watson and Ed Lee Wrothe, will entertain the Sunday audience. The musical program includes "My Own Home Town in Ireland," by Jack Howard; "Minstrel Parade," by Fehman and Estelle Colbert; "Sweet Girl in Monterey," Hazel Woodbury, and "The Flying Dutchman," by Mr. Watson. The concert by Warner's Orchestra will be given as usual.

### Casino—"The Christian."

Manager Falkner this week is presenting as the choice of his audiences of the past week, (determined by an applause vote), Hall Caine's play, "The Christian," which is familiar in a way to patrons of the movies as well as of the higher price theaters. Louis Ancker, the leading man of the Hall Players, will be seen in the role of the young minister, John Storm, whose zeal in endeavoring to rescue the girl companion of his boyhood life from the temptations of the stage, went so far as a determination to kill her to save her soul, until he was crushed by his persecutors and Glory Quayle, who had been unmoved before, learned to respect and to love him and hastened to his side to fight the



ELSIE JANIES—KEITH'S



HELEN HAYES BROWN—POLI'S

battle against vice with him. Jane Ware, the leading woman, will be seen in Viola Allen's old role of Glory Quayle.

### Cosmos—Vaudeville.

The Cosmos Theater this week will present for the first time in Washington an art water spectacle, "The Nymphs of the Fountain," which has an underlying fairy romance for a basis. Five acts of high-class vaudeville will also be included in the program comprising the Carroll Gillette Trio in acrobatic and risqué Broadway ditties and dances; and Wilbur Johnson, in melodies, dialogue and dances, with an act to be announced in the program. The new Selig Tribune news pictures will head the program, featuring Ford Sterling.

Toban's "Hungarian Fantasia," selections from Fucini's "Madame Butterfly," Donizetti's "Dance of the Hours," from "La Gioconda," selections from Kern's "The Doll Girl," Von Blom's "Serenade D'Amour," and two rag novelties, Mahoney's "Hypnotic" and Oleman's "Red Onion," will enter in the mixed orchestral program at the Cosmos Theater tonight. The program will also offer new specialties and other attractions.

### Garden—Feature Films.

Francis X. Bushman and Beverly Bayne will head the double feature show, Moore's Garden Theater today, tomorrow and Tuesday in "Man and His Soul." The story deals with the birth of conscience and its subsequent influence upon mankind. Throughout the drama an allegory is interwoven, showing the creation of the world, together with the Garden of Eden, Mr. Bushman and Miss Bayne are supported by Helen Dunbar, Grace Valentine, Edward Brennan, Charles Prince and others. The auxiliary attraction during this engagement will be a Keystone farce comedy, "The Hunt," featuring Ford Sterling.

### Strand—Feature Films.

At Moore's Strand Theater today and tomorrow the program will be headed by Syd Chaplin, in Mack Bennett's multiple reel production "The Submarine Pirate." So successful was this production upon its initial showing at the Knickerbocker Theater, New York, that its run was prolonged for several weeks. "The Submarine Pirate" was produced with the co-operation of the Navy Department of



WETTE GUILBERT BELASCO—WED. AND FRI.



JULIAN ELTINGE—IN "COUSIN LUCY" NATIONAL



JUNE MILLS-GAIETY—STRAND

## PROMISED NEXT WEEK

There are forty voices in the chorus and Composer Woess will direct the orchestra.

### "A World of Pleasure."

Next week the Belasco Theater will have the New York Winter Garden production, "A World of Pleasure," the latest offering of that home of musical revues. Washington will have the opportunity of seeing this biggest of all musical spectacles its second week out of New York.

In the second act of this production, among other scenic effects, there is one of a war fleet maneuvering at sea, which is said to be the biggest as well as the most realistic reproduction ever devised. The cast includes Chifton, Crawford, Conroy and Le Marie, Collins and Hart, Clara Rochester, Rosie Quinn, Venita Pittsburgh, Helen Goff, Bert Hanlon, Emily Miles, Aveling and Lloyd, and a chorus of 100.

"The House of a Thousand Candles." For the week following "The Dummy," the Poli Players will be seen in "The House of a Thousand Candles," adapted from Meredith Nicholson's best seller of the same name.

The house of a thousand candles is a house of mystery in which an aged butler is the central figure in a series of startling incidents.

It was in Washington, at the Columbia Theater, some six or seven years ago that "The House of a Thousand Candles" had its first performance, with the famous character actor, E. M. Holland, in the leading role, and it should prove a most acceptable offering in stock, as it affords opportunities for striking character delineations as well as developing a strong romantic interest.

**Vaudeville.** Mrs. Langtry (Lady de Bath) in her farewell American tour will be the stellar attraction next week at Keith's. The beautiful former Jersey Lily, who would seem to share with Lillian Russell the Ponce de Leon secret of eternal youth, will be seen in a one-act comedy of London society, "Ashes." Other noteworthy numbers will be Julian Rose, creator of "Abe Frotz," in "What Happened at the Wedding," Ruby Norton and Sammy Lee, in musical comedy nonsense, "The Old Homestead" double quartet; the Four Meyakos, in a Japanese act fresco offering; Daniels and Conrad, in instrumental virtuosity; Lucy Gillette and others.

**Burlesque.** The Social Maids will appear at the Gaiety next week, headed by Stone and Pillard. The principals and their support have been provided with an entirely new vehicle called "Busy Little Cupid," and Mr. Hurlst is said to have shown his usual lavishness in equipping the production with scenery and costumes. Responsibility for the book of the burlesque is laid at the door of Leon Berg and Will H. Vordrey composed the special music. Bill Baker, William Porter, Jack Pillard, Marty Seamon, Jessie Hatt and the Jewell sisters are others in the cast.

**"The Blue Paradise."** "The Blue Paradise," with Cecil Lean, is now on its way to its 20th performance at the Casino Theater, New York. "The Blue Paradise" is Viennese operetta in its purest and most popular form. It abounds in melodies which have long since established themselves in public favor, and the operetta is sung by a capable company, including, in addition to Mr. Lean, Frances Demarest, Cleo Mayfield, Yvonne Segal, Hattie Burks, Teddy Webb, Harold Crane, Ted Lorraine, Gus Schrader and others. The matinee will be Wednesday and Saturday.

While talking of the Poli Players, and their capable leading man I am reminded to tell you that I received the cutest little baby-blue bordered announcement last week of the debut upon the world stage of Izetta Jewel Brown, the little stranger who has come to bless the life of the most popular stock actress whom Washington has ever known—she whom we still love so much that we can't bring ourselves to speak of her save as "Izetta," although we know perfectly well that her social position as a Representative's wife suggests a greater dignity on our part.

But who wouldn't rather be loved than revered?